

NEWS BRIEFS

BHIMA SANGHA

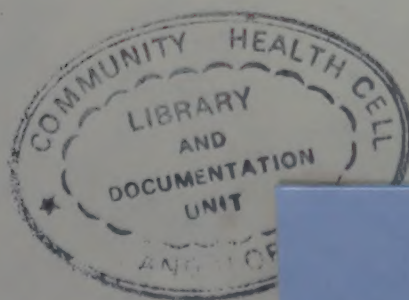
CONCERNED FOR WORKING CHILDREN

STATE

NATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL

CH-150
04720



Community Health Cell
Library and Documentation Unit
367, "Srinivasa Nilaya"
Jakkasandra 1st Main,
1st Block, Koramangala,
BANGALORE-560 034.
Phone : 5531518

4720

BHIMA SANGHA

BHIMA SANGHAS

Bhima Sanghas (the word Sangha means 'association' or 'union') have been formed by children participating in CWC's Bangalore based Ankur and Basrur based Gramashrama programmes. The Bangalore children launched their Sangha officially on 30th April 1990 and Basrur children formally launched their own Sangha on 14 November 1990.

Bhima Sangha children have met with large public gatherings, media people at press conferences, government officials, police officers and ministers of state to make specific suggestions that would better their lives. They have formed enquiry commissions and conducted in-depth studies collecting first hand information on the circumstances of accidents that proved fatal to other working children.

Today, there are 42 Bhima Sanghas both in Bangalore and in the South Canara district with 1200 working children as its active members.

Bhima Sangha is now very much integral to CWC's field work. Through these collectives, the children have effectively demanded and advocated for their rights .

They have adopted an environment-friendly appropriate technology to strengthen their work with the traditional sector, and are actively involved in promoting its use in their communities. They have taken on a major role in sensitising their communities to health hazards and have imparted information regarding preventive measures. They have recognised the need to participate in the political process and have chosen and supported candidates for the local election. This support was extended to those who are concerned about children, the needs of the community and protection of the environment. They have done all this and more towards improving the conditions of the society they live in and enhancing the quality of their lives.

Child Labour Day

In one of the earliest meetings of the working children, they had expressed a need to have a day on which a large group of them could come together on one platform to understand their common problems and to express solidarity with each other. This could be an occasion to raise their demands unitedly. The day would embody the sheer joy of coming together as a Sangha. The day before the internationally recognised day Labour Day May 1, seemed an appropriate choice for Child Labour Day. For many working children at Basrur and Bangalore, April 30, Child Labour Day has become a very special day, which they have proudly christened as Namma Habba (our festival).

FINDING SOLUTIONS FOR THEMSELVES- Namma Kadu

The children from different villages in which Gramashrama works had come together to discuss what they could do to help their parents increase the viability of their traditional occupations, so that they themselves could stay on in the village and not be forced to migrate to the cities. Among the problems that were discussed was the increasing non-availability of raw material, costly production processes and shrinking local markets.

Children decided: "We want our own forest (Namma Kadu) and in that forest we (Bhima Sangha, an association of working children) will grow bamboo and cane for our parents to make baskets with. We will grow the grass needed for making mats and trees for fuel. We will also grow trees that will attract birds. We will grow the trees necessary for bees to make honey and make a pond for fish and lotuse. The earth dug out to make the pond will be used for building houses and making pots. We will also plant edible and medicinal herbs.

"We will plant this forest ourselves and when this forest has grown we will protect it and use it only for our needs. No trees will be cut, only branches, because a tree takes a long time to grow. After that we will let loose animals that our parents have told us used to be in the forests in this area, but only after the trees have grown, or else animals like rabbits will eat the plants before they become trees."

In preparation for the creation of this forest, the children decided to make a list of all the trees that the forest should have, the nurseries where they are available and the seasons during which they should be planted. They also decided to learn how to make natural compost, to start growing saplings and to begin supplying vegetable seeds and plants to their parents for kitchen gardens.

They also decided to visit all the nearby **santaes** (village markets) and shops to find out what traditional products were being sold, their price and where they were produced. This, they felt, would give their parents a better idea of retail prices, profit margins and the diversity of products and designs. They were determined to find their own solutions to the problems they and their parents face.

Now, children's dream of having their own forest is slowly taking root.

Namma Shale (Our School)

The Namma Shale (Our School) programme for the empowerment of children was implemented in both the field programme so that the children will;

- * engage themselves in a lucrative occupation that will ensure a reasonable standard of living,

- * contribute and participate in the development of the community and in the re-generation and preservation of the environment and

- * actively contribute to and participate in the political and other decision making processes in their area.

Case study of a team of children who have graduated in Low-cost construction technology

At the request of the children themselves, vocational training in various fields has become an important aspect of CWC's work to promote the empowerment of working children. The construction technology course focusses on low-cost, environment-friendly and aesthetic building methodologies.

The team of six children from Bhima Sangha who have graduated in this course are now able to design, plan, cost and construct a house for a rural family.

The team is currently executing entire building contracts and is earning Rs.60-70 per day. With this, they are not only able to repay their loans, but also plan constructively for their future work. They are currently at Bangalore working on a contract.

CONCERNED FOR WORKING CHILDREN

The Concerned for Working Children

Wall Journal for Working Children

Bhima Patrike is a monthly wall magazine in Kannada brought out by the Concerned for Working Children. The magazine is designed for working children. Written in simple and direct language and creatively illustrated, Bhima Patrike has become an integral part of the life of the children we work with. (refer to para Bhima Patrike)

Because of the strong links it has forged between the children, Bhima has proved to be a major motivator for the formation of Bhima Sanghas (independent childrens' collectives), which are integral to CWC's field work. Through these collectives, the children have effectively demanded and advocated for their rights.

Community Mobilization in Reddy Palya

Reddy Palya, a slum tenement near the HAL Sanitary Board Area, witnessed a very shocking mass rape incident on February 3, 1995. The most tragic aspect was the police refusing to file the case. The case was registered after the local MLA's intervention. CWC intervened and brought the episode to the Police Commissioner's notice.

The Police Commissioner immediately stopped the attempt to get bail for one of the accused in the Gang Rape. To embolden the women in the area, on 8 April '95, CWC organised a special Women's day Programme in the Slum. Presently as a follow up of this, a process to mobilize the community is going on.

The Police have still not succeeded in bringing to book Bande Raja, one of the main accused in the case.

Children's escape from Hotel Ayodhya

As you may recall, in March 1993, The Police raided Hotel Ayodhya in Bangalore to rescue the working children on the basis of complaint by one of the adult workers in the hotel. The children who had migrated to the city were brought to the hotel on false promises of getting a job and good salary and were imprisoned in the underground hell and not paid the so-called salaries that they were promised. Children were frequently punished with hot iron rods and merciless beatings with a belt.

After the children were rescued, CWC helped the children to get their salaries due, and brought back the children to Nammene (CWC's Working childrens' hostel). Here the children were given counselling and an option to return to their homes or choose a vocational training programme offered at Nammene.

CWC filed a case against the Hotel Owner Mr. Chadrasekhar, who hails from Koteshwara, Kundapura taluk in South Kanara.

A protest march and dharna was also staged Bhima Sangha and Gramashrama(CWC's Rural Programme in Kundapura) in front of the native home of Mr. Chandrasekhar.

Despite all these, the hotel Ayodhya case is still pending in the criminal and civil courts.

Unfortunately, the media which had given an extensive coverage of the incident has not given the issue the kind of follow up required which would have prompted immediate action in this regard..

Hotel Toofan

After Hotel Ayodhya incident, CWC conducted a sample survey in Hotels of Ulsoor division. Ulsoor division, which was one of the 87 divisions of the city was chosen for the sample study to understand the projections of working children in all 87 divisions.

On the basis of this study, we could project that an estimated 17,400 children working in the hotel industry in Bangalore city alone. For most of these children, exploitation and humiliation is the order of the day.

After these revelations in the sample survey, CWC started thinking of interventions in the Hotel sector which is by no means an easy task.

The Action Plan planned by CWC for Hotel Sector is called as Hotel Toofan, meaning winds of change. The objective of Hotel Toofan is to eradicate child labour in the hotel sector in the city of Bangalore in a period of five years.

This proposed plan of action takes place in three phases. The first includes rescuing children who are below 12 years of age and providing them with alternatives. For those children between the age group of 12-16, providing inputs while regulating their working conditions.

In the second phase, the children who are migrating to the city will be met at the bus stop or the railway station in what are called as Contact points and are provided with various inputs to empower them.

In the third phase, the districts from where there is large scale migration will be identified and measures will be taken to revitalise the rural economy to reverse the trend of migration.

All these needs coordinated and active participation of the working children, the employers, NGOs and concerned government departments, for which a Task Force has to be set up.

Children's Monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of the Child

As mentioned in the News Brief - National, a few Ngos in India are currently working on the production of an alternate report to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. CWC's work experience with children has proved beyond doubt the ability of children to assess the situation they are in and perceive the actual status of child rights.

This laid the foundation to CWC's work towards facilitating a process where children monitor the CRC from their perspective in terms of the impact the CRC has on their everyday realities. They will look at the tools which may help them to realize their rights, the obstacles in their way and what should be done to overcome these.

Five to six teams of working children from different parts of India will participate in this process. These children are already participating actively in advocacy and this monitoring will be one more aspect in their process of empowerment.

Panchayat Toofan

This is a state plan of action proposed by CWC. This aims at creating model panchayats.

The Panchayats selected are :

- 5 panchayats in Kundapur Taluk in South Kanara district
- 2 panchayats in Hosanagara Taluk, Shimoga District
- 2 panchayats in Siraguppa and Hoovinahadagali Taluks in Bellary district.

The aim of the Panchayat Toofan is to stem migration of children and their families from rural to urban area which is the prime cause of child labour and exploitation. To achieve this,

- a.) Education should be made appropriate, exciting and relevant to rural children.
- b.) Expand opportunities to sustain a decent life strengthening traditional sector with appropriate technology.
- c.) Panchayat should play a vital role in supporting rural child workers.

The proposed time span for the project is five years during which the CWC will be the accountable institution. Afterwards it will be handed over to the local self government along with the infrastructure.

As a first step in this process the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) has been completed for all the nine Panchayats, to prepare the resource maps and also for the identification of the problems.

Education Workshop

The issue of school dropout children prompted Gramashrama to intensify its interactions with the schools in the vicinity. Informal discussions with the teachers in those schools began early last year. In April 1994, a month long workshop was conducted where 30 potential school drop outs (As identified by teachers) and 30 working children participated. Innovative methods were used to provide the children a wide range of inputs. It was very significant to learn that later only one of the 30 school children actually dropped out of school.

The experience of this workshop indicated that more interaction with children presently in the schools, the teachers in those schools and the Panchayat and State Government officials involved with education could contribute to enhancing the quality, relevance and accessibility of the school education in the region.

After series of discussions with children, teachers and officials, it was decided to conduct a nine day workshop from April 22nd to 30th at Namma Bhoomi.

Seen in the context of the framework in which Gramashrama has been working, this workshop is significant. It emphasis the need to rejuvenate school education with inputs from the local expertise. The process will introduce the children attending both the formal and non-formal education systems to the traditional occupations and skills of the village. It will activate the involvement of the community in the education of its children. This is in fact preparing the grounds for the entire village to become a teaching and learning area.

Overall objectives of the workshop:

- * Increase in total enrollment of children
- * Increase in girls enrollment
- * Teaching and learning materials to be made gender sensitive
- * To involve the local artisans in the process of education of children
- * To involve the active participation of children and the community in decisions related to education like: the school calendar, time table, school's location etc.,

Objectives of the workshop:

- * To involve the local artisans in the preparation of teaching and learning materials along with teachers and children
- * Understanding and using montessori method of teaching
- * Creating teaching and learning materials for gender sensitivity
Inspiring confidence in the teachers
- * To show the possibility of building in creativity and active participation of children even within the existing curriculum.

Enclosures:

- * Partnership Form
- * Devara Kadu Film Brochure
- * A brief on the film Julu Julu Andalo

STATE

STATE SCENARIO

STATE PLAN OF ACTION ERADICATION OF CHILD LABOUR

In India, to combat the issue of child labour 300 N.G.O's collaborated in November 1992 to constitute the Campaign Against Child Labour.

CACL asserts that the eradication of child labour will not occur until the issue becomes a national concern; therefore, CACL is primarily a public awareness campaign. In an attempt to be effective at both the state and national levels, CACL has established state chapters throughout India.

Before the State election, in a signature endorsed by more than 40,000 citizens of Karnataka, the demands put forth by the Karnataka chapter of CACL were :

1. the setting up of a Child Labour related Task Force,
2. budgetary commitment to eradicate child labour
3. a proposed State Plan of Action

The Karnataka Janata Dal Party which was then in the Opposition was a signatory to this commitment to eradicate child labour. In fact, the party election manifesto included child labour as one of the major issues that would be looked into if the Janata Dal came into power in the November 1994 elections.

The pre-1994-election promises and post-election assurances of the Janata Dal regarding their commitment towards the eradication of child labour in the state appears to be no more than verbal platitude. The budget session which was eagerly anticipated by the 96,000 working children of the state and all the people concerned with the issue has been a big let-down.

The Budget proposal, as yet, has made no reference to the issue of child labour and no budget allocation has been specified for work toward the eradication of the problem. It is obvious that all assurances of concern and commitment to the issue are meaningless in the absence of financial planning for promised. This absence of budgetary commitment is indeed deplorable.

It is all the more glaring because the Chief Minister, Mr. Deve Gowda in a meeting with representatives of working children and the Campaign Against Child Labour (CACL) on March 18, 1995 has assured that the State Plan of Action proposed by the CACL toward the eradication of Child Labour would be very seriously looked into and its recommendations to set up a Task Force in Karnataka to work for the eradication of child labour considered.

The Secretary to the Department of Women and Child welfare had to submit its report regarding this on March 20. It may be recalled that the above mentioned meeting was held as a follow up of a protest by hundreds of working children and members of the CACL in front of Mr. Deve Gowda's residence at dawn on the same day.

The Task Force

This means the integration of the issue of child labour into the local levels through task forces designed by the government departments (e.g education, panchayat raj, health, labour, urban and rural development) whose decisions have a tremendous impact on the child labourer.

Commission on child labour

The State government should also establish a Commission on child labour and have a specific time frame with the Deputy Chief Minister (Chairperson); Chief Secretary (Vice Chairperson); Development Commissioner (Member); secretary : Social Welfare, Education, Health, Labour, Panchayati Raj, Rural Development, Urban Development, Finance, Information and Publicity and Planning (9 members); Individuals with expertise on the issue of child labour including social activists (2 members), social scientists (2 members and legal experts (1 member); representatives of child labour forums (2 members); representatives of Media who have effectively covered the issue of child labour (2 members); and Director , Women and Child Development(1 member).

KARNATAKA GOVERNMENT NOTIFIES THE CHILD LABOUR ACT, 1986

After nine long years of its existence, the Child Labour Regulation and Prohibition Act, 1986 has been notified by the Karnataka State in February 1995.

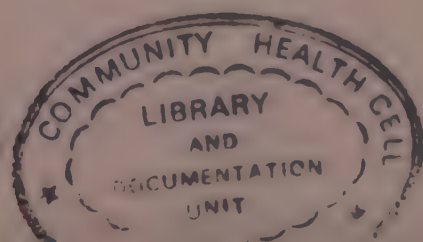
As labour is on the concurrent list each state has a provision by which the Act can be amended to be made more comprehensive and effective. The State also has to notify the Act and formulate rules to implement it within its boundary.

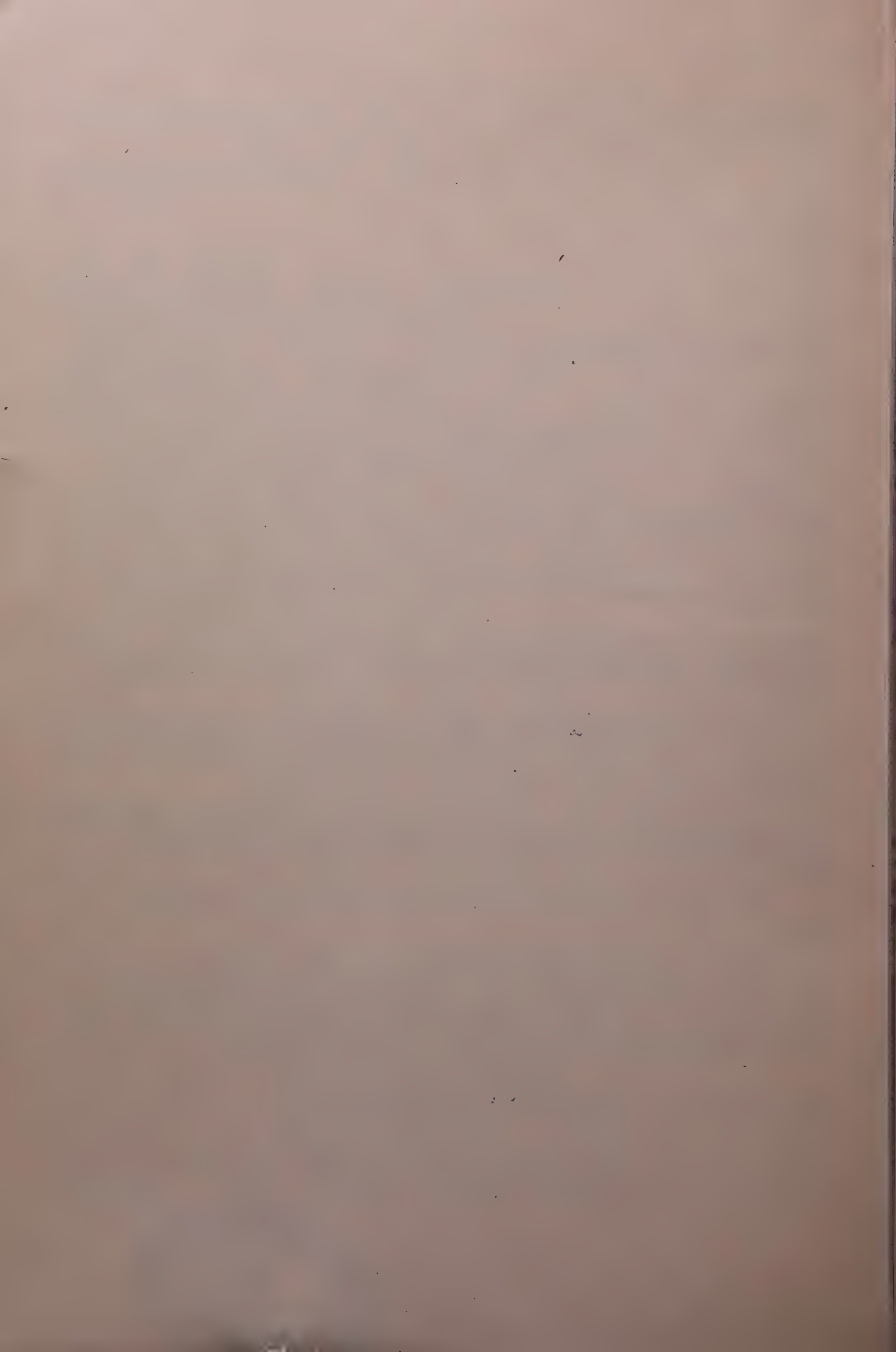
Karnataka has not utilized the provision to amend the Act though many significant loopholes have been pointed out in the existing Act.

Some of the aspects covered in the notification include:

1. Hours of work of the child.
2. Certificate of age.
3. Health and Safety of the children in the establishment.
4. Working on or near machinery in motion.
5. Prohibition of employment of children near cotton openers.

The rules are not comprehensive and leave a lot to be desired. A copy of the notification is enclosed.





NATIONAL

THE NATIONAL SCENARIO

CHILD LABOUR - A NATIONAL AGENDA

Bhima Sangha (Association for Working Children) expressed the need to have a day for themselves, to draw the attention of society to their existence and problems. It is also seen as a day to come together and celebrate their childhood. April 30, the day before Labour Day, May 1, has been marked as Child Labour Day. Now, many NGOs in different parts of India have taken on the day to raise the issue. The organisations working with children appreciate the fact that the mainstream media has also recognised it.

Child Labour Day, 1995 is fast approaching. We hope that the mainstream media will utilise the day to raise relevant issues regarding children and bring the issue to the forefront.

In this regard, it is significant to note that Prime Minister, Sri P.V.Narasimha Rao, for the first time, gave assurance that child labour would be eliminated in five years, in his Independence Day address (on 15 August 1994).

The National Authority for Elimination of Child Labour was launched on 1 October 1994, by the Union Labour Minister, Sri P.A.Sangma. Official sources said nearly 200,000 children would be covered under the scheme, which involves Rs.850 crore, and would be implemented in states and regions, where the employment of children in hazardous industries is maximum.

But after the news of setting such a panel no further update has been provided about the project and how the government plans to utilise the allotted funds.

INDIA & THE CONVENTION on the RIGHTS of the CHILD (CRC)

The Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 is the first Convention of its kind, in that, it specifically deals with the needs of children. The next important step was to get national governments to ratify the Convention. The Indian government ratified the 1989 Convention in December 1992. But this action was accompanied by a total lack of publicity.

The ratification by India is conditional, the conditions so impossible and all encompassing that we may as well as not have ratified it at all. The provision that the ratification is subject to the fact that "certain of the rights of child, namely those pertaining to the economic, social and cultural rights, can only be progressively implemented in the developing countries, subject to the extent of available resources and within the framework of international cooperation" is as good as saying that we are not in a position to implement the articles of the Convention at the present time and the Government of India has shifted the moral responsibility for this on the so called 'Developed World' and the aid they will give us.

No wonder then that India was not proud of the fact that she had ratified the Convention and the government made no effort to announce this landmark in the history of the Indian child. Is this apathy or lack of Commitment ?

It is now more than two years since India ratified the Convention. The Indian government was to submit its report on the measures they have adopted which give effect to the rights outlined in the Convention to the Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva in December 1994. But, from the latest information the report is nowhere near completion.

As the deadline to submit the Country Report came closer, references to the Convention in the official mass media channels also became frequent. But very rarely was any mention made about the provision for a parallel report which may be submitted to the Committee of the CRC (1).

At present, there are three NGOs who are working on a parallel report in India. They are requesting other NGOs to participate in the process by contributing case studies and situation profiles. The NGOs working on the report are Butterflies in New Delhi, YUVA in Bombay and CWC in Bangalore.

The CWC's experiences with working children, has inspired us to begin a process by which children themselves will monitor the Convention on the Rights of the Child in their own perspective and also present their report to the Committee of the CRC at Geneva.

SOCIAL CLAUSE IN MULTILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENTS - NATIONAL CONSULTATION

A National Consultation on the Social Clause in the Multilateral Trade Agreement was held with a broad cross section representing trade union from the organised, unorganised sectors; women's groups, human rights activists, academics, campaigns, movements, voluntary organizations and others, from 20 - 22, March at New Delhi.

The participants included:

A.B. Bardhan (AITUC)
Arun Attre Dr. (Centre for Environmental Science)
A. Roychowdhary (Centre for Science & Environment)
Alpa Vora (CACL)
Babu Matthew
Duarte Barreto (CEC)
Devaki Jain Dr. (Institute of Social Studies Trust)
George C J (TDH)
H. Mahadevan (AITUC)
Kailash Satyarthi (South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude)
Nandita Haskar Ms.
P.K. Ganguly (CITU)
P. Sainath (Times of India, Bombay)
Praful Bidwai
Smitu Kothari (Lokayan)

Swami Agnivesh (Bandhu Mukti Morcha)
Vandana Shiva Dr.
Vinod Raina (Eklavya)

After an intensive debate The Consultation brought out the following points.

1. There was unanimous agreement that the Social Clause as part of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) is motivated by protectionist intentions. It's provisions are designed to act as non-tariff barriers in trade, in favour of the developed countries.

This further distorts the unequal international trade regime institutionalised by the Uruguay Round of General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) and WTO, with its inherent bias against the developing countries and working people of the world.

The Consultation also noted that the opposition to the Social Clause by the Southern governments, employers and exporters is itself motivated by narrow self interest, which is nothing to do with the interests and rights of the vast majority of the working people.

2. It was noted that the Social Clause as proposed by Governments of developed countries in no way reflect the concern for the working and oppressed people of the world. It has to be viewed in the broader context of an unequal and unfair international trade regime foisted through GATT\WTO and through the Structural Adjustment and other programmes of the World Bank and IMF combine.

3. The dominance of WTO/World Bank/IMF is taking place concomitantly with the weakening of the UN system. In this scenario, national governments including the Indian Government are increasingly willing to accept the conditionalities imposed by the WTO/IMF, at the same time totally disregarding the obligations they are party to, under the UN system, particularly the ILO and Human Rights Conventions.

4. It was noted with alarm that violation of rights of labour, women, child, human and environmental rights had intensified with globalization and Neo-Liberation Economic Policies. Hard won rights are being systematically eroded. More and more workers are being pushed from the organised to the unorganised sector. And the unorganised sector is being further impoverished and marginalised. The impact of this is being felt increasingly on women and children.

5. It was agreed that a Social Clause cannot be a substitute for a Social Policy that ensures the rights of working people and communities.

6. There were essentially two responses to the linkages of labour, environmental and human rights standards to the Multilateral Trade Agreements. One view was that since these linkages are part of a larger exploitative international order, it is to be rejected outright. But at the same time, it was noted that the struggle for labour, environmental standards and against child labour must be intensified.

It must be pointed out that such a rejection is totally different from that of the government position since it involves the rejection of the WTO/GATT.

7. The other view suggested that given the criminal track record of the state, the Social Clause in Multilateral Trade Agreement could provide a bargaining position and strategic use of international pressure to enforce labour/women/child rights. In this view too, it was expressed that the internal struggle for protection had to be intensified.

8. The Consultation very strongly brought out the need to forge alliances and linkages of victims and working people at the national/regional and international level, to counter the increasing onslaught of the neo-liberal global regime.

The following Action Plan was adopted by the Consultation as a follow up measure.

1. To disseminate widely information regarding the WTO and the Social Clause and to initiate discussion among the workers, both in the organised and unorganised sector.

2. To develop linkages among all those affected by the current Multilateral Trade Agreement and Economic Policies.

3. To enter into dialogue with NGOs and Trade Unions in developed countries with a view to bridge the differences in opinion regarding the Social Clause.

4. To constitute Four Working Groups on Environment, Labour Standards, Human Rights and Technology respectively, so as to evolve a deeper understanding of the linkages.

5. To hold a second consultation in Bangalore, later in the year, to work out further positioning and strategies.

RAJASATHAN GOVERNMENT TAKEN TO TASK

A lot of highly visible media advocacy has been done around a nail polish factory in Ajmer, which caught fire killing four children who were working there. Also the Tonk rescue, wherein the local S.P. rescued 35 children working as bonded labourers.

Shri Ugam Raj Mohont, son of late Shri Mool Raj Ji Mohont, aged about 70 years, resident of Jaipur, has filed a writ petition versus

1. The State of Rajasthan through its Chief Secretary, Govt. of Rajasthan, Secretariat, Jaipur.
2. Shri Ashok Shekhar, I.A.S., Labour Commissioner, Rajasthan, Jalebi Chowk, Jaipur.
3. Shri Abhimanyu Singh, I.A.S., Secretary to the Government of Rajasthan, Education Department, Secretariat, Jaipur.
4. Smt. Alka Kala, I.A.S., Secretary to the Government of Rajasthan, Social Welfare Department, Secretariat, Jaipur.
5. Shri K.N. Thakur, I.P.S., Director General of Police, Rajasthan, Jaipur.

The petitioner is devoted to the cause of eradicating child labour and protecting children from every type of abuse. At present he is actively associated with the "Centre of Concern for Child Labour, Rajasthan Project", a registered society with its Headquarter at Delhi. He is the Coordinator of the Rajasthan Branch of the Centre. He has quoted many incidents of child abuse regarding children working in hazardous industries in his petition.

He has demanded the following steps of action from the Government of Rajasthan :

1. To direct the State Government to make rules under the Child labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 and to implement the provisions of this Act strictly.
2. To direct the State Government to identify the hazardous industries in which child labour is being employed.
3. To undertake survey and study in a systematic manner the working conditions of child labour in Rajasthan.
4. To appoint a high power committee including Secretaries from the concerned departments, few Members of Legislative Assembly and few concerned (sensitive) citizens devoted to the cause of The Child to facilitate the State Government in discharging its executive functions vis-a-vis the children employed as child labour in Rajasthan.

1. As outlined by ARTICLE 41 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, all State Parties who are signatories to the Convention are obliged to present a report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child for "the purpose of realization of the obligations undertaken in the present Convention."

INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL SCENARIO

INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUP ON CHILD LABOUR

The International Working Group on Child Labour (IWGCL) is a three year project (1994 - 1996) which aims through a global, action oriented, and participatory study to bring the issue of child labour centre stage, to influence the policies and programs of governments, international agencies and non-governmental organisations, and to develop and promote together with these and other partners, including organisations of child workers, effective strategies for the eradication of exploitative child labour and the protection of millions of working children around the world.

The IWGCL is producing a series of reports on the causes and manifestations of child labour, drawing on solutions which have been implemented around the world. This will form the basis on which the IWGCL will formulate specific strategies for the eradication of exploitative child labour and the regulation of child work.

The six main geographical regions that have been selected are Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, The Middle East and North America. The culmination of this process will be the building of a global report which will outline an agenda for action.

The IWGCL is committed to consulting children and involving them in its research and decision making. To enable such participation the IWGCL has designed a process which will give children the possibility to participate at appropriate levels in line with their age and abilities.

As the IWGCL project moves into the last and most crucial phases of its work - that of developing strategies for the eradication of child labour and the protection of child workers and lobbying for acceptance and implementation of these strategies - the increased participation of organisations of working children in our project is essential.

Announcing the Working Childrens' Summit

In this respect we are now in the process of preparing NGOs and organisations of working children to participate in IWGCL Summit for Working Children, which will take place during the first few months of 1996 in Senegal.

REPERCUSSIONS OF THE BOYCOTT INITIATIVES IN BANGLADESH

With a massive concentration of some of the world's poorest people, Bangladesh is heavily reliant on Child Labour. Many of the children in the cities, work in the garment sector, one of the country's main modern industries and the most important source of export income.

A number of unions have taken a strong position on the child labour issue. In May 1991, the women's network of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union launched a nationwide campaign in the United States, charging the country's largest discount retailer with purchasing Bangladeshi garments made with the widespread use of Child Labour.

Such actions, and strong support from the largest U.S trade union federation, The AFL_CIO, were an important force leading in 1992 to proposed U.S. legislation banning the import of products from foreign industries which employ children under 15 years of age.

This raised acute fears that a ban on exports to the United States of garments made in factories of Bangladesh using child labour might be imminent. With government support, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Export Association (BGMPA), which was formed in 1992 to promote and protect employers' interest urged its members to divest themselves of under-aged workers, in conformity with the Bangladesh Factories Act. As BGMEA is responsible for arranging export licenses it wields considerable influence on employers in the industry. There were talks of the possibility of a huge fine being imposed for every child found working, provided an added incentive for employers to commence abrupt dismissals which began in January 1993. The exact number of children removed from the industry is not known, although it is estimated by the BGMEA officials that some 55,000 children may be affected. Nobody really knows what happened to these children once they were removed from the factories, or what the effects of their dismissal on them and their dismissal on them and their families.

Although the removal of children was desirable in the long term, abrupt dismissal was likely to lead to destitution - specially since no mechanisms for compensating the children has been foreseen. also, the dismissal would not cause children to enrol immediately in school but rather force them into jobs less secure less well paid and far more hazardous than garment manufacture.

None of the former child workers returned to school. Few had never attended it in the first place, and so on dismissal, at roughly 12-15 years of age they were too old to enter the formal system, both because of official restrictions and because they had fallen too far beyond their age group. Besides, given family poverty most had no choice. Half the dismissed children found jobs immediately and half were actively seeking jobs at the time of the investigation.

CHILDREN'S AGENDA AT THE SOCIAL SUMMIT

Save the Children (SCF) had brought out a document - Childrens' Agenda at the 1995 World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen has brought out a document - Childrens' Agend for putting people and their needs at the centre of decision making.

Save the Children (SCF), is an international agency working for the welfare of children worldwide, argues that only if children and their needs, interests and perspectives are placed at the centre of social and economic policy alongside and equal to those of adults. Putting children at the heart of policy making is not a special pleading on their behalf; nor is it simply a moral imperative. It is essential to the success of any economic or social policy, whether or not it is explicitly directed at children's needs.

Developing a children's agenda requires a set of basic principles which should govern all decisions over policy and practice.

Specifically the report calls for :

- Measures which enable adults to combine their childcare and productive roles effectively
- Invest more in pre-primary and primary education, primary health care and community based child care
- Additional resources for female literacy and education
- Monitoring the impact of key policy measures on children
- Development of mechanisms to include children's views in decisions which effect them and to participate in public debates
- Reforms of legal frameworks to promote the best interests of children (as outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)

THE INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME FOR THE ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR

The German government after the World Social Summit in Copenhagen has given 50 million d .m to the The International Programme for Elimination of Child Labour. The IPEC programmes in Thailand, Turkey and Tamil Nadu will soon be evaluated by the German Government and will focus on how the money is being used and whether or not the money is being used in the way in which it was intended. (target child labour programmes)

There is apparently concern (from ICFTU and the Scandinavian countries) that IPEC is tooo wide and the focus is not on the strategies. This may therefore be a subject for debate at the ILO conference In June. The ILO also feels the need to initiate a worldwide campaign against Bonded Labour with the ILO acting as "mobiliser" and drawing in UN agencies, several countries and NGOs etc. This would involve a serious political commitment from ILO and would not be a purely IPEC initiative. This campaign would unite the movement given that the Child Labour scenario has different actors coming in and a lot of money is involved (additional support to IPEC).

